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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DPC 58

ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS AND RADIO NEWS BRIEFING, THURSDAY,
MARCH 28, 1963, 12:22 p.m.

MR. WHITE: Gentlemen, we have several releases which should be in your hands. The first--at least as I have them here--is No. 156, an address by Harlan Cleveland, at a banquet conference on "Educational Investment in the Pacific Community," Palo Alto, Friday, March 29, 7 p.m. We are putting the usual--no, no; it's 6 p.m. EST--embargo on it. "Reflections on the Pacific Community."

No. 2, an address by The Honorable W. W. Rostow, Counsel and Chairman of the Policy Planning Council, at a Regional Foreign Policy Conference, Bellevue Stratford, Philadelphia, 8 p.m. tonight, "The Cold War -- A Look Ahead."

Finally, No. 154, loans and other financial assistance, which the US will provide to the Government of Argentina, in support of renewed standby agreement concluded by the International Monetary Fund yesterday.

✓ ^{Daniel} Mr. David F. Margolis, Deputy Director of the Office of East Coast Affairs, has come down to hold my hand--if you have any questions--on a background basis. Dan, do you want to pull up, if there are questions?

Q Japan is being invited to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, as a member. Do you have any comment on that?

A I am sorry, I am not briefed on this at all, Spence.

Q Linc, with regard to these recurrent hit-and-run raids on Russian ships in Cuban ports--

A Yes.

Q --the US Government has said for weeks that it was investigating these things to see if any violation of the law occurred, etc. I realize the Justice Department has a major role in it, but from the State Department's standpoint, what can you say to carry the story any further? Are you getting any more evidence? Do you have any idea of what you can do about this, if anything, and what do you think about the possibility of these creating even more dangerous tension in the Caribbean?

A Well, I can only speak to raids that emanate from US territory; that is, any area over which we have jurisdiction. And we have as yet had no report on the investigation into this Alpha 66 raid of--what, the 14th?

Q How about the one Monday?

Q March 16, yes.

A Was it the 16th?

Q Eighteenth, or seventeenth.

A All right.

(Laughter)

A Well, of the one of the 26th, we have information that a raid actually took place. According to the information we have, the ship was damaged. We have no confirmation of its being sunk. We have no information on casualties or the methods used in damage to the ship.

Nor have we any information on where the attack was launched from; namely, whether from US or other territory.

Q Linc, may I ask you--you said we only speak of the raids that emanate from US territory. Does that admit they do emanate from US territory?

A No, I do not admit that at all. I say that the question was in the nature of what can we do about it. I can only answer for territory over which we have jurisdiction.

Q Well, Linc, I understood the President to have said last week that the evidence from this investigation showed it was launched from outside the

United States.

A That is correct.

But what I am addressing myself to is we have had no report of the completion of this investigation, and so on.

Q Linc, could you repeat the last sentence of the previous statement you made, on where the attack was launched from?

A Yes. We have no information on that, on where the attack was launched from--pardon my grammar.

Q All right, you have got Churchill for your authority. You are talking about the last raid now?

A That is right. I am talking about the raid of the 26th.

Q Well, Linc, would it be within the State Department's province to make some representation to another Caribbean country?

A Let me amend what I have said before, that we still have no evidence that the Alpha 66 raid was launched from US territory.

Q Which raid was that?

A Alpha 66.

Q Which one was that?

A That is the--whatever the date is.

Q March 18.

A March 18 raid.

Q Linc, if it turns out it was launched from some Caribbean country other than the United States, would it be within the State Department's duty to make a representation that this is dangerous?

A Well, we have made an over-all statement on what we think about these raids. Now, I will confine myself to that.

Q Linc, Mr. Castro is on the wire threatening to go out and buy some long-range bombers, apparently to prevent raiders from attacking ships in Cuban ports, or something like that. Do you have any comment on it?

A No, I have no comment on it. I have heard about this on the tickers, but that is all I know about it.

Q Linc, the Soviet note, I believe, claimed that whether these came from the US territory or not, that the fact that the United States has had considerable operations in the Caribbean, had not prevented them, somehow was a violation of the Kennedy-Khrushchev exchange agreement at the time of the missile--

A I was asked that yesterday, and I know of no agreement between the President and Mr. Khrushchev that is relevant to this situation.

Q Excuse me. Can I ask--

A Yes.

Q --I guess I am unusually stupid today--do I understand that the State Department has no evidence of any raid at all on the first occasion?

A Can you answer that, John? Whether we have any information concerning the Alpha 66 raid at all?

MR. KING: We know it took place.

Q We know it did take place?

MR. KING: Yes.

Q Do you have anything coming up this afternoon, Linc?

A Nothing that I know of.

Q Is the Secretary going to have a press conference this week?

A No, I am afraid he can't. His schedule has gotten awfully tight.

(Whereupon at 12:43 p.m., the conference was adjourned.)

(ECRichard)